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The
Court Sermon.

1674

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THE
COURT SERMON:

1674.

SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN
BY GILBERT BURNET,
Bishop of Salisbury.

Cincinnati:
ROBERT CLARKE & CO.
Publishers.
1868.

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H.

P R E F A T O R Y.

About eleven years ago I obtained the manuscript sermon here printed, from London. It was advertised in an old-book catalogue, as "MS. Court Sermon, 1674." The price was a trifle, and having no specimen of English writing of so early a date, I ordered it, but without much expectation of obtaining it. In due course of time, however, I received it, and found it a neatly-written manuscript of one hundred and twenty pages. The size of the written page is six inches by three and a quarter. The two pages photographed, but little reduced, being the address to James, Duke of Ormond, will give an idea of the peculiarities of the writing. In printing, the spelling, the use of capital letters, the "u" and "v" of the original have been carefully followed.

In the address, the author says: "It was prepared for his Ma:^{ties} own hearing, but things having Intervened to binder it from being preacht before him, And being fit for no other Auditory, I confesse I could not hinder my self from wishing, That, in writeing, it might be found not alltogether vnusefull. My Lord, there is no vanitie in the case, Since the Authour's name shall for euer be conceal'd."

There was, of course, no signature, but in its place is entered, in a contemporary hand, the name of "Gl Burt," as will be seen in the photograph.

The query then is, was Gilbert Burnet, afterward Bishop of Salisbury, the author of the sermon? The writing is not his. "A comparison of the photograph with specimens of Burnet's handwriting proves distinctly that the MS. was not written by him." Editor "NOTES AND QUERIES," London, 3d Series, Vol. 12, page 367. This is of little weight, however, as one passage in the sermon makes it quite certain that the author did not write this copy, but that he had "a faire coppie" made by a professional "clerk," for presentation, and that he did not read or revise it afterward. How else can we account for the occurrence of the following passage (see page 13), in which, when he comes to his first point "Of exposing unto you the various kinds of follyes," he says: "And here, Looking round mee, I observe in my whole Auditory a more than usual attention"? The sermon was never delivered, but he knew that was where the attention ought to come in—very much, I suppose, in the way that "great applause," etc., become attached to particular passages of speeches nowadays.

It may be, then, that, taking it for granted that the

writing is not that of Bishop Burnet, still, the sermon may be his. The address is dated "September the 10th, 1674." He was deposed from his chaplaincy by Charles II. the previous summer, though, as kings had a royal way of doing such things, there may have been many others similarly deposed about the same time.

There are two circumstances mentioned in the address which seem to indicate that he was not the author, viz: that he was "bred" at Oxford, and that he had "lived much abroad."

Bishop Burnet could not, in any strict sense, be said to have been "bred" at Oxford. He took his degree of M. A. before he was fourteen, at the college of Aberdeen. His only visit to Oxford, in his early days, was in 1663, when he "improved his mathematics by the instructions of Dr. Wallis." He was there, however, only a few months, which would be but a shallow foundation to a claim to having been "bred" at Oxford. He could say with as good a grace that he had been "bred" at Amsterdam, as he studied Hebrew there the following year.

Previous to 1674 his only visit "abroad" was in 1664; at least I find no note of any other visit. It may be, however, that in those days six months "abroad" may have been considered "much." It is possible he may

have exaggerated in these two particulars, in order to prevent his friend from identifying him.

The sermon is a quaint one ; and treating mostly of the follies of princes, it was no doubt peculiarly fit for "his Majesty's own hearing ;" yet it may "be found not altogether vnusefull" to general readers in these latter days.

R. C.

THE COURT SERMON.

1674.

*To the Right Hon.^{ble} James Duke of
Ormond, Lord Steward of his Ma:ties
Household, Knight of the most Noble
Order of the Garter, And Chancellour
of the Vniversitie of Oxford.*

My Lord:

*As Chancellour of that vniversitie where I
was bred, This Adresse to your Grace might suffi-
ciently be Justified, But the true motive to mee in
the making it hath been, The Eminent Demonstra-
tions you have alwaies given of Integrity and zeal
for the good of our Sovereign's Royal person, And
for the prosperitie of his Dominions, Which, the
great god is my witnesse, hath been my only aime in
the framing of this Discourse. It was prepared for
his*

*his Ma:ties own hearing, but things having Inter-
vened to hinder it from being preacht before him,
And being fit for no other Auditory, I confesse I
could not binder my self from wishing, That, in
writeing, it might be found not alltogether vnusefull.
My Lord, there is no vanitie in the case, Since the
Authour's name shall for euer be conceal'd; Only
thus much, I think, I ought to tell your Grace.*

*That before it pleased god to call me to the pro-
fession wherin I now serve him, I have liued much
abroad, And, There, been honour'd with good acceffe,
to Men, Knowing in the chief Courts of Cbristen-
dome. Vpon w.^{ch} account, It is hoped, I may be
allowed some bolder touches then are Vsually ventured
upon, in Sermons, by Men bred meerly schollars.
The whole, my Lord, is submitted to your Judgment,
ffor which none hath a greater Reverence then*

Your Graces

Most humble Servant,

G! Burr!!

September the 10th

1674.

100

100

100

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100

Discourse. It was prepared for his
own hearing. But things having In-
terposed to hinder it from being pre-
sented him And being fit for no other Auditor,
I confess I could not hinder my self from wish-
ing, That, in writing, it might be found not all-
together Unusuall. My Lord, there is no vanitie
in the case, Since the Authour's name shall for
ever be recorded; Only thus much, I think, I
ought to tell your Grace.

That before it pleased god to call me to the
profession wherein I now serve him, I have
lived much abroad, And, I have, been honoured
with good answers, to Letters, Knowing in the
chief Courts of Christendome, Upon what
account, It is hoped, I may be allowed some
holder touched then are usually ventured
upon, in Germany, by Men bred merely
Schollars. The whole, my Lord, is sub-
mitted to your Judgement, For which none
hath a greater Reverence then.

Your Grace

September the 10th
1674

Most humble Servant.
Ch. Hunt

THE COURT SERMON.

PROVERBS
chap : 26.

*Verse 4. Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest thou also be like Vnto him.*

*5. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest
hee be wise in his own conceit.*

They are the words of Solomon in the 4th and 5th verses
of the 26th chapter of his proverbs.

This Book is in the Hebrew called
Misle A word derived from a *Radical* which signifies
Dominion and Superioritie, And is rendred, as well
in the Greek Septuagint as by all Latin Interpreters,
By words signifying Proverbs and Parables, with a
very reasonable relation to the aforefaid signification
of the *Radical*, Since there is no way of Instru&tion

Carries with it so much of Superiority and Magiftrallneffe as that of Proverbs, parables and Apopthegmatical sentences.

Now as to Proverbs, They are well defin'd by a Learned Authour, *Sermones ad vitæ rationem Conducibiles, moderata quadam obscuritate, multam in se Vtilitatem Continentes*. Such, among the philosophers, were the Documents of Epiëtetus, And such the admirable sentences of Pythagoras called his Golden verses, so excellently paraphrased by Hierocles.

As for Parables, Our blessed Saviour himself took much the way of teaching by them, And gives this reason for it. That hearing men might hear and not vnderstand, That is such men as were negligent, and not attentive as they ought to bee to his Divine Doctrine. But for them who bring due application with them, There is nothing of more advantage, as to a right discernment of things, then the parabolical way of exposeing them, for whilst one thing is so exprest, as to make it evident that another is meant, It engages the vnderstanding in accurate both attention and enquiry.

Besides, as the word Parable, according to it's Greek Etymologie, signifies a Similitude, So there is Nothing that gives a clearer light into the nature of any Subiect, then doth Comparifon of one thing with another.

Beloved,

Beloved,

It hath pleased God to preserve to his Church, three inspired works of Solomon's, which seeme to mee naturally enough applyable to the three degrees of life, tending to perfect beatitude. The Purgative, The Illuminative, And the Vnitive.

His proverbs to the first, His Ecclesiastes to the second, And his Canticles to the third.

The Jewish Rabbies say, That the Canticles were writ by Solomon when hee was young. The Proverbs in his maturer age. And Ecclesiastes when hee was an old man.

Which opinion of theirs, although I think it weakly Inferrd from their reason for it, That is, from the manner only of Solomon's naming himself in the severall books, Yet I think it a Judicious one from Consideration of the works themselves.

for the Canticles appear to mee, as it were, As exhaling of that Divine fire of Love, which ravisht Solomons soule vpon his first heavenly Irradiations, Before hee Declin'd to any thing of sensuality, ffor otherwise it might bee too Liable to the prophane Imputation of an amorous poem.

As for his Ecclesiastes, It will appear to any attentive Reader, That it was written after a full experience of worldly Gloryes, Pleasures, Vices ;
And

And from thence, a final recollection and penitent reflection on the vanities of them all.

And Lastly, as to the Proverbs, It is manifest, That they are wholly directed to the right ordering of a Civil & Moral life, Conformably to that age wherein mankind is fittest for publick societie.

Some Learned men have much Labour'd (but surely in vain) to find out a Coniunction and Coherence of sence, in these proverbs of Solomon Relatively to one another. But the Opinion of those appears to mee the most reasonable, who Conclude, That they were, for the most part disjointed sentences, Standing, as it were singly by themselves, And to bee occasionally applyed vnto their severall subjects. But yet, That, taken all together they might well bee said to make up the compleatest body that ever was written, of practical Phylosophy, According to the triple Division of it, into Ethicks, Politicks and Oeconomicks.

As for the speculation of those, who would have the proverbs vnderstood, as a *Convivium Solomonis*, where, according to ancient custome, matter of knowledg and Instruction was most smartly produc'd, In Imitation wherof, Plato is said to have formed his *Symposion*, And after him Xenophon and Plutarch theirs. This Notion, I say, appears to mee too subtle and of too much refinement. But thus much, Beloved, I shall adventure to say, That had the
book

book of kings and all other Records of Solomon's Divine Inspiration been Lost, This book alone of his Proverbs, remaining, might have been sufficient to give a clear perception, That his speculations, even in human things were farr above bare human reach. And had the rest of his proverbs been Lost, The two verses w^{ch} I have read unto you, might haue made us in a good measure know, *ex pede Herculem*, as they say. Since I am perswaded there can hardly bee found elsewhere two Joint precepts of so sharp and notable penetration into the Intimate nature of human frailty.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, Lest thou also bee like vnto him.

Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest hee bee wise in his own conceit.

Whilest I discourse vpon this subject, Beloved, I will help your memories by an easie Division of what I intend to Deliver.

I shall first expose vnto you, The several sorts of follyes, set forth by Solomon, to which, remedies and preventives seem design'd by him in his proverbs.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to determin vnto what kinds of fools these two precepts of Solomon may seem principally to relate.

And Lastly, I shall Conclude with two Doctrinal observations from them Applied.

But before I enter vpon these points, or upon any farther explication of my text, It will bee fitt I say somewhat to you upon occasion of the seeming Contrariety of these two precepts.

Answer not a fool &c^a

Answer a fool &c^a

Beloved

It hath alwayes been the endeavour of Impious and prophane witts, To derogate from the reverence due to holy writ, By remarking Incongruities and Inconsistences in several parts of it; As it hath been constantly the work, of pious and Learned men, To clear all passages of scripture from those malicious Imputations, which would make god's word appear, as it were, *felo de se*. The old testament is much more subject to haue that advantage taken against the Authority of it, then the New, In regard of the straitnesse and ambiguous nature of the Language wherein it was written, *the Hebrew*. Strait I say, & narrow, As having but seauenteen hundred Radical words (or Thereabouts) from whence all others are deriv'd; which must needs occasion want of propriety and Circumstantialnesse, The two qualities, in expression, most necessary to the giving cleer notions of what is Intended.

And Ambiguous nature, Chiefly
Occasioned

Occasioned by two eminent defects, as to writing, (How perfect soever the Hebrew may have been as to elocution).

The first, The resemblance to one another of many prime Radical letters, As of *Beth* to *Caph*, Of *He* to *Cheth*, Of *Daleth* to *Resh*, and others, Such, As requires a very good sight to distinguish them, even in print. And much Lesse is the difference discernable in Coppyed manuscripts, Currently, if not Curforily written.

The second from this, That all antient writings in Hebrew, Before the Mazoreth at Tyberias, five hundred years after Christ, consisted of Consonants only, To which the vowels were adapted, in the reading, according to exigence of the sence. So that, as in other Languages, the sence of what is written arises out of the words, It may Colourably enough bee said, that, in the Hebrew, The words arise out of the sence. From whence great doubtfullnesse, of the right Signification intended, must in some cases necessarily follow,

For the same Consonants, as well in many derivatives as Radicals, signifying several things, far differing from one another, It falls out sometimes, That two significations remote from one another in themselves are found to bee equally Consistent with good sence in a Sentence. And then,
what

what signification of the Consonantal Radix, Or what adaptation of vowels ought to bee admitted, Can only bee decided by Tradition, That is, By verbal Derivation, from age to age, of the Original Intention of the first Authour.

from whence possibly, may in part have grown, The Sacrednesse, among the Jews, of their Cabala, Through the Necessitie of founding their Religion vpon Tradition, as well as vpon the written word.

Wheras the New testament, having been written in the most Copious and accurate Language of the world, *The Greek*, A Language Rich, not only in the numerousnesse of single words, But also in such compounded ones, as to fitt all subiects with Circumstantial and Proprietal expressions, Seems to mee in much lesse danger of perplex and Ambiguous Constructions; And Consequently, The help of Tradition Lesse necessary to the Rule of Christian faith then it was formerly to that of the Judaick Religion.

The proverbs of Solomon, And particularly this 26, Chapter, from whence I have chosen my text, might furnish many notable Instances of the various Explications, Occasioned, in the Interpreters of them, by the differing significations of the same words, in the unpointed manner of Antient Hebrew writing, were it Natural to my subiect, Or apt for this place to produce them.

Now,

Now, Beloved, As to what concerns particularly the repugnancy between these two texts, I shall need add little to what the Learned Grotius says of them. Hee calls these texts—*εναντιοφανείς*. That is Appearing Contradictious. And as such, hee ranges them with the two opposite precepts of the Pythagoreans. *Λεωφόρου θαδίξεν. & Λεωφόρου μη θαδίξεν*. Go in the Common high-way. Go not in the Common high-way. But hee adds. *Sed quæ adhibita, temporum et rerum, discretione, facile Conciliantur*.

Contradiction is never rightly imputed, but where the affirmative and the negative are both applied to the self-same subject at the self-same time. And, in the future discussion of these texts, That distinction of things and of times will let you Clearly see the Rational and usefull subsistence of these seeming oppositions together.

Beloved,

I come now to my first point, Of exposing vnto you the various kinds of follyes, set forth and provided against in this work of Solomons.

And here, Looking round mee, I observe in my whole Auditory a more than usual attention. Nor do I wonder at it, Since there is nothing more engaging to the attentivenesse of Human nature, then exposal of the Defects of others.

Say

Say true, are there not some among you, who, from an enumeration of those many sorts of follies, wherewith the Corrupt state of mankind is diversified, expect to find that neighbour's defects display'd, to whom they bear least good will? But let whoeuer Listens with that thought, either withdraw the Attention, Or Carry it on further, til hee pitch also vpon the picture that most resembles his best friend, Since no man was euer born of a woman exempt from eminent follies of one kind or of another.

Optimus ille

Qui minimis urgetur.

Beloved, when I impute folly to all mankind, Let it not bee taken in that offensive fence, wherin most men will easilyer forgive a publick reproach of Lewdly vicious, then the being told by any that they are fools. Good god! By what false Notions are mens sentiments and resentments sway'd in this world, whilest taking themselves to bee more wounded by the name of fool then of wicked man, They give not themselvs leave to reflect on this most Orthodox truth, That sin and wickednesse is the greatest folly, And Consequently, The Lewd and vicious man the greatest fool. The truth of this Assertion may bee clearly Infer'd from divers texts of Scripture. I shall mention but two. The first from the first verse of the 6. psalm. Where it is said. *The fool*
bath

hath said in his heart, there is no god. By the word fool in which text, all Learned Expositors unanimously agree, that the wicked man is to bee understood. And so wickednesse is made there, (as usually in many other passages of scripture) even Convertible with folly.

The other Confirmation of this assertion, I take, from the 7. verse of the first chapter of the proverbs. where Solomon lays it as a ground to all his ensuing Documents of prudence, That *the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.* *Principium Sapientie*, according to vulgar translations. But according to the most accurate Critticks in the Hebrew, Interpreting the word *Reshith*, *Premitiæ et præcipua cujusq. rei pars*, which makes the sence of the verse run thus. *Principium scientiæ hoc est præcipua inter scientias est timor domini.* And so, by the concluding reason of contraries, Since the fear of god is the principal of sciences, and the greatest perfection of Sapience, The supremest wickednesse (that is the contempt of god) must needs bee the highest of follyes. And the foo, mentioned in the Latter part of the same verse, who despises wisdom (that is the fear of God) the most superlatiue fool.

Beloved, As this Position is most firm in Divinity, That wicked & vicious men are the greatest fools, So, were the Consideration of god and Religion

Religion quite Layd aside, The Certainty therof might as fully be made good in Moralitye.

Reflect and confider seriously I beseech you, What vice, what wickedness is there, forbidden by the Law of God, from which wee ought not to bee restrayn'd, by that civil prudence, which only can make men live easily and Comfortably together, As sociable Rational Creatures, and fellow Cittizens of the world. Or to which a man abandoning himself, doth not become a fool, That is recede from those Rules of reasonable-living, By which secure-Living with one another must bee maintayned.

It would bee too tedious to dilate vpon the dismal efforts of folly & madness, which, In relation meerly to this world, excesses in vice, Such as Drunkenness, Adultery, Breach of faith, And other extrauagant transportments against the Laws of politick Moralitye, and bare humane prudence, haue drawn upon nations & kingdomes Generally, as well as upon Princes and greatest Potentates personally, By a chaine of Necessary Civil consequences.—without engaging Divine providence or vengeance in the argument

Beloved, The word *fool* is oftener used in proverbs & Ecclesiastes, then in the whole volume of Scripture besides. And no wonder, Since the main design of those works, appears to mee to haue been, The prescribing of remedies and preventiuues
against

againſt follies, That is, Againſt diſeaſes of the mind, dangerous to general ſocieties of men, and to the happineſſe and tranquility of Individuals. Receipts far more pretious then thoſe, which Jewiſh Rabbies ſay that Solomon had cauſed to bee written on the walls of the Temple, for cure of bodily Infirmities. And whoeuer ſhall carefully peruſe thoſe books will find, That ſcarce any blind-side of human-nature hath ſtay'd his obſervation, or miſſ'd, in them, of ſome enlightening application.

Contraria Juxta ſe poſita, magis eluceſcunt

So, Solomon, having, in the beginning of his Proverbs, to the fourth chapter, painted out wiſdome, with all it's beauties and advantages.

In the reſt of the book, diſperſdly hee expoſes, to the full, folly, In all its ſeuerall Deformities, with the miſchiefs accrewing from it.

Fools are ſet forth by name in eight and fifty texts of the proverbs, And in four and twenty of Eccleſiaſtes. But in many other, various kinds of them are expoſ'd euen more Liuelily and impreſſiuely then where they are named.

Although by the word *fools*, as well in the proverbs as in other parts of ſcripture, wicked men are oft underſtood, (Since all wickedneſſe proceeds from defect of underſtanding, (Howeuer vitious men

may presume upon their witts,) Yet in most places
Such fools are understood, whose weak intellectuals
Lead them to several sorts of extravagances, According
to the several impulses or propensions of their nature.

The Impudent, The Miser, The
Slothfull, The testy fools, and other sorts, whose
follies are most hurtfull to themselves, are sufficiently
remarkt, And some of them sent, as it were, to
school to Brute-beasts, Some to such a contemptible
Insect as the Ant. But those are most fully painted
out, who are most troublesome, and of most inconvenience
to others, as well as to themselves, And most
disturbing to the ease and securitie of Human life, and
prudent Conduct in the Civil course thereof. Such as,

The Drunken

The Lustfull

And above all, The presumptuous
ouer-weening fools.

Beloued, How can the temptations
and allurements to Lustfull follies, And the mischief
of yeelding to them, bee more liuelily represented Or
more Graphically describ'd then in the 7th Chapter of
proverbs from the 13th to the 24th verse

13 *So shee caught him and kissed him,
and with an Impudent face said unto him.*

14 *I haue peace-offerings with mee.
This day haue I paid my vows.*

15 *Therefore*

15 *Therefore came I forth to meet thee,
diligently to seek thy face, and I haue found thee.*

16 *I haue decked my bed with Coverings
of Tapestry, with carued works, with fine Linnen
of Egypt*

17 *I haue perfumed my bed with mirb,
aloes, and Cinnamon.*

18 *Come Let us take our fill of Loue until
the morning. Let us solace our selues with Loues.*

19 *ffor the Goodman is not at home, Hee
is gone a long Journey.*

20 *Hee hath taken a bag of money with
him, And will come home at the day appointed.*

21 *With her much fair speech shee caused
him to yield, With the flattering of her Lipps shee
forced him.*

22 *Hee goeth after her straight-way, As
an Oxe goeth to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the
correction of the stocks*

23 *Til a Dart strike through his Liver,
As a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not
that it is for his life.*

Beloued, How can enticements and
provocations to the folly of drunkenness bee more
naturally or more movingly set forth, then in the 23
Chapter of proverbs. vers. the 31.

31 *Look not thou upon the wine when it
is*

*is red, when it's colour shines in the glasse, when it
moveth it self aright,*

Or the mischiefs flowing from that
Liquid expresse.

*Ingreditur blande &c^a, But at the
Last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*
vers the 32

And in the 29. & 30th of the same
Chapter ;

Cui vae? Who hath wo? who
hath Contention? who hath wounds without cause?
who hath rednesse of eyes? *Cui vae?* Is it not to
those that tarry Long at the wine? *Et Student Calicibus
epotandis.*

Dearly beloved

I trust in the great goodnesse of
almighty god, That no one man of my Auditory is
come to this place, to serue him, and hear his holy word,
But hath brought along with him both moral and Chris-
tian resolutions, to disengage himself from two such
odious vices, In case hee hath been unhappily plunged
& intangled in them. If not, Or that these Lessons of
Solomon's haue not caused a trembling within him, at
the memorie of his own obscenenesse and bestialitie, I
dare say hee is in a sad Estate, of Searednesse and In-
sensibilitie of Conscience.

All

All words I could add vnto those of that most wise king, upon these subiects, would but slacken their force. And therefore I shall only pray to the great Mediatour for mercy, That hee would divert his fathers iustice from that vengeance wherewith so many Eminent Indiuiduals among us are threatened, for their abandonment to these two vices, And the whole Nation for the Countenance giuen unto them by Superiours.

As for what Concerns presumptuous, Ouerweening fools, Sentences against them, in this book of Prouerbs, are most smart and numerous, But they will bee more naturally & more forceably expof'd unto you, in my enquiry and explication what sort of fools are principally aimed at in these two precepts of my text, which is the point that comes next to bee handled.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, Lest thou also bee like unto him.

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

Now for the more particular explanation of these two verses, I shall obserue Vnto you, That both the precepts do clearly Concern the same fools in one kind, That is, Such fools as cannot keep their folly to themselves, but must bee prattling to others, for the text doth not say, Speak not to a fool according to his folly, But *answer* not a fool, which

supposes his speaking and uttering his folly first, to which the discreet hearers return, is by these precepts to bee regulated; But this understood, It grows then a question to what sort of fools, venting their impertinences in words, these two rules are principally Intended. And Learned Expositors differ very much in the point.

As to the first verse, Vatablus, Clarius, Caietan, and Janfenius agree, In applying it to the railing and reviling fool, whom they understand that a wise man is here forbid to answer, by railing and reviling him again, Left hee bee also like unto him, An exposition, In my opinion not only narrow and dull, but very unnatural, ffor though railing and reviling of others bee often a Concomitant of folly, It is not a natural proprietie of weak and disordered Intellectuals, But rather of strong and distempered passions. Neither doth a return of railing, upon preceding provocation Induce so much a Consequence of want of understanding, as of want of temper and moderation.

Some other among the Learned would haue the first of these verses understood, Of fools, in the sence of that word most usually taken by Expositors of Scripture, That is, wicked men, Who are not to bee answered, say they, by a good man according to their folly (that is, their wickednesse) Left he become like unto them, That is, alike wicked. But this also appears to mee, a strained and unnaturall construction.

And

And I cannot but wonder, I confesse, how any difference of Opinion can haue continued, among Judicious Considerers of this matter. Since nothing can seem to mee more Clear and evident, Then that this whole 26 Chapter, in as much of it as concerns fools, Is primarily directed against presumptuous and Ouerweening fools. Vain, euen of their folly, and of others being like unto them in it, and Consequently Incorrigible. Of which that you may the better Judge, I fhall read unto you some principal verses of that Chapter, relating to them.

Vers *As snow in summer, And as rain in Har-*

1 *uest, So honour is not seemly for a fool.*, verse the first.

As much as to say, Nothing more preposterous, more unseasonable, then the giuing of honour to a presumptuous fool, Snow in Summer, not more unnatural, Nor rain in harvest more Hurtfull.

3 *A whipp for the horse, a bridle for the asse, and a rod for the fool's back.* verse the 3^d

As who should say, The seuerest Correction is as unproper and uselesse to a presumptuous incorrigible fool, as a whipp to a horse that is too free of himself, Or as a bitt to an asse, whose own stupiditie keeps him back too much already. A whipp precipitates the free horse, and a Bitt stupifies yet more the Drowsie Asse; Euen dull asses are vain. Who hath not seen a dull asse frisk as if hee presumed upon agilitie.

6 *Hee*

6 *Hee that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool, Cutteth off the foot and drinketh Damage.* verse the 6th As who should say, Hee cripples his own businesse, and must needs suffer Damage by it. To whom can this so properly belong as to the presumptuous fool, who is likely to marr the message by intermixing somewhat of his owne. ffor a weak, unperfuming fool, may deliver a message punctually enough.

7 *The leggs of the lame are not equal, so is a parable in the mouth of a fool.* verse the 7th As who should say, A parable, (that is, an ingenious sentence or similitude) in a fool's mouth, is as ridiculous, as a man, having one leg shorter then another, who will yet bee running. Of whom can this bee so rightly understood as of the presumptuous fool, who alone, of all the ignorant, will venture to bee sententious.

There is a french proverb, *Toute Comparaison cloche*. That is, All comparisons halt. Now a parable, being a Comparison, Can hardly, (though in the mouth euen of the wise) bee so adequated between differing subjects, but that some disproportion may still bee found in the paralel. But a parable, A similitude, in the mouth of a fool, must needs bee quite Lame. As lame as the man that wants feet.

8 *As hee that bindeth a stone in a sling, So is hee that giveth honour to a fool.* vers the 8th
This

This text hath feueral very differing translations, among the Learned Interpreters of the Hebrew, arising from the forementioned ambiguity of that Language, in writing, which it might seem asserted to produce in this place. Since the same fence, upon the whole matter, vizt. of honour's being cast away upon a fool, results from them all, And may most properly bee applied to the presumptuous ouer-weening fool.

9 *As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of a fool.*
verse 9th

As who should say, The ouerweening fool, who presumes to bee parabolical and sententious (which belongs only to the wise,) Is like a Drunkard, who pretending to gather a Rose, runs the prickles into his hand, and makes no profit of the flower.

11 *As a Dog returns to his vomit so a fool returneth to his folly.* vers. the 11th As who should say, As a dog, by eating of Grasse, dischargeth, for a while, his stomach of offensive stuff, but soon returns to swallow it again, So the presumptuous fool may perhaps bee brought, by proper applications, to discharge himself of some folly for a time. But hee will soon return again to his extravagance,

Naturam expellas furca licet, usque recurrit.

12 *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit,*

conceit, there is more hope of a fool then of him.
 verse the 12th As who should say, A man wise only
 in his own opinion (the true representation of a pre-
 sumptuous fool) There is lesse hope of his cure, by any
 applications of the wise, then euen of an Idiot's.

Lastly, beloued, to shut up all the
 passages of this 26th Chapter, Concerning fools, I shall
 repeat the verses of my text,

*Answer not a fool according to his
 folly, Lest thou also be like unto him.*

*Answer a fool according to his folly,
 Lest hee bee wise in his own conceit.*

Beloued, Having, as I conceiue, made
 it in some good measure cleer, To what fort of fools,
 expressing their folly, These precepts are principally
 applyable, Let us now look more particularly into the
 true sence and Intention of them

It is to bee considered, That it is not
 said barely, Answer not a fool, but answer him not ac-
 cording to his folly. There lyes the force & Empha-
 sis of the precept. A wise man may answer a fool
 seueral wayes without incurring the imputation of being
 like unto him. As by way of admonition or of scorne.
 But there is no answering a fool according to his folly,
 That is, by way of Concurrence or compliance, with-
 out giving just occasion to the being thought a fool
 also. That is, Becoming like unto him both in the
 judgment

judgment of the wiser, and in the presumptuous fool's own vain conceit.

It is further to bee observed, That as the following verse shews the negative Doctrine of the first to bee no general Rule at all times, So, euen at the time when it is to bee observ'd, It is no Positive precept, forbidding the thing as absolutely Inconvenient, But rather in the nature of such Laws, as Interdict practises under a penaltie, which men are free to do, Submitting to the mulct for so doing.

For there are Coniunctures, wherin the complying with a fool in his folly, Yea, and passing for a fool for so doing, may bee the wisest thing that a prudent man can do; I make litle question, But that Junius Brutus did fully satisfie his own wisdom and vertue (which carried him to so great a design as the redeeming of his Countrey from Tyranie) In passing with all Rome for a fool: Nor do I doubt but David, in the Court of Achish, would haue been glad to appear a fool, By answering fools according to their folly, when as he drivel'd upon his beard, to make him self passe for a mad-man. *Sapientis est Insipere in Loco.*

With weak and wicked princes it is oft times prudence, to disguise not only witt but vertue too. It is true (as it hath been often said,) There is no part so hard for a wise man to play well, as the
fool's

fool's part. I haue been told that to dance Exactly Counter-time, requires much a iuster eare, then to dance passably well in Cadence. In actions where nature is forced, It is very hard doing things Naturally.

Now, beloued, as to the following affirmatiue precept, The force and Energy of that also lyes in the word *According*, But in a construction of that word farr differing from the other. There, by *According* is cleerly meant, According to the nature of his folly. That is Complyantly. But here, According to the Merit of his folly. That is Rebukingly, Scornfully, or Instructingly. ffor the *According* taken, here, in a more favourable sence, would tend much rather to the making the presumptuous fool yet more vain of his own wisdome, Then to hinder him from being wise in his own conceit. Good god! How much do many men contribute to the sins and follies of others by their silence. But how much more is folly and sinne heightened in this world by the applause they too often find, from those who passe for witty & Ingenuous.

Vpon the whole matter, The full sence and scope of these two verses, as I can collect it, by way of result from all the best expositors, Is, in short this. Answer not a fool according to his folly.—when the answering him so, may hurt thy self.

And answer him, according to his
folly.

folly, when thy not answering him, as it deserves, may do him hurt.

Dearly Beloved,

Prefumptuous Ouerweening fools,
In relation to whom the last of these precepts is unquestionably giuen by Solomon, may truly bee said to bee, The Grand grievance both of Christian and Moral society. Of Christian, As they shake the two main pillars of true piety in this world, Humility and Charity. And of Moral, By their troublesome intrusion into the concerns of all men. The inward essence of a presumptuous fool is, *Ipso facto*, exclusive to Christian Humility. And his outward acts are all vpon the Contre-pied of Charity. Whose slips, whose failings, (though through meer frailnesse of humanitie) Did the overweening fool euer spare, in any thing, where his short sight could reach to remark a weaknesse? To all other fools nature seems to haue proscrib'd and Limited peculiar spheres of their activitie, In w^{ch} though hurtfull to themselves, they are many times beneficial to others. And so, as it were, By discords help to make up the Harmony of the world.

The prodigal fool brings himself into straits, but puts others more at their ease. The avaricious fool pinches himself, But provides for his successor wherewithall more freely to Indulge his pleasure.

The

The heaue slothfull fool reaps not the benefit hee might of what his territory would afford him. But, at the same time, Hee giues others the advantage of cutting the grasse under his feet.

All other fools allow peace and quiet, at Least, to their fellow-fools of differing kinds. But the presumptuous fool is vniversal in the molesting extent of his folly. Hee is Intruding, and intermedling in euery thing, And troublesome to all, In all stages and professions of men. And were the truth rightly displayd more troublesome to himself then to all others. For I haue euer obserued, Those men who cannot live easily towards Others, to Liue alwayes, most uneasie to themselues.

Let a presumptuous fool bee aboard the Admiral of a fleet, (though neuer before expos'd to greater winds then of a Lady's chamber door left open) Hee shall presume to direct the best master of England, what sail to make after a flying enemy.

Let the presumptuous fool bee in a Camp, with the greatest General in Christendome, Hee shall bee Interposing his advice in a day of battell, And bee sure to say, vpon any unfavourable successe, If hee had followed my advice &c^a.

Lastly, Let a presumptuous fool haue the luck to bee in a Council of State (As sometimes that happens in the world) What work do his
vain

vain excursions make there? And how oft do his reiterated weak arguments, Embellisht and Illustrated, as hee thinks, by ornament of Learning and Oratory, make the wiser, that hear him, euen ready to beshrew those that taught him to write & read. And here it is, Beloued, That this latter precept of Solomon's is most properly to bee applied. Answer such a fool, according to his folly, That is, as his folly deserves, Either Convinceingly or Correctingly. Left, by sparing him, hee grow wiser and wiser in his own conceit, And Consequently more and more troublesome in Councils.

Beloued,

Having sufficiently discoursed unto you, of the varietie of follies, according to Solomon, I come now to Consider, What Instructive Doctrines may naturally bee deduced from that which hath been exposed unto you. I shall insist but upon two. The one, taken from the two verses of my text. viz^t That no man ought to Comply with the weaknesse of another, To his own or others prejudice. From this Doctrine may properly be drawn, apt lessons, concerning flatterers of princes & soothers of great men.

The other, arises from the considerations formerly exprest, Of the nature of wisdom & folly viz^t That from the Lowest to the highest stage of mankind, No man deserues the name of a fool, (how weak

weak soeuer in more General talents) who discharges the duty of his particular Calling, Rightly and faithfully. And that whoeuer is failing therein, Let his parts bee neuer so quick and pregnant in other things, ought not to escape the imputation of folly.

ffrom this assertion will naturally flow, euen to princes themselvs, Important memento's of their Incumbent Dutyes.

The first of these two Doctrins must bee taken with two distinctions. Wee are to distinguish betwixt frailties and follyes, and also betwixt Innocent harmlesse follyes, and such follyes as are of Noxious Consequence. ffor Since all mortal men haue not only their frailties but Conspicuous follyes also of one kind or another, There is not a more Recommendable qualitie in human Societie, Then a gentle Compliance with the weaknesse of others.

That Compliance may truly bee said to bee, Not only a principal conciliatrix of kinnesse and easie living betwixt man and man, But euen a strong Cement of reciprocal friendship. Provided alwayes, That our accomodableness to the Imbecilities of others, in the way of easie Living, bee not such as to strengthen and confirm in them their defects, wherby occasional frailties may grow to ill habits in them.

Nor such as shall engage our selues in a participation. To a purblind neighbour, whose
fight

fight can not reach so farre as ours, It is good (if it Lye in our power,) to help him to such a glasse as may fit his eye, Or to bring the object (if it well may bee) into his visual distance, But not to put his Contracting Spectacles vpon our own noses, Or to hold the book so near to our own eyes as not to bee able to read. And much Lesse to doe as in the Court of Dionisius, where men ran their heads one against another to make the tyrant believe they were shorter fighted then hee. Intellectual discernment, and the clearnesse or confusenesse therof, holds a good proportion with our Corporeal vision of things.

It is written of Alexander the Great, That being the Louelyest man of the age, Hee held his head on one syde, His Courtiers might haue been allow'd to admire how well that ill gesture became his Gracefullnesse in all things; But to bend their necks awry, as if it had been a becoming thing to them also, was a mean & servile flattery.

Flattery which hee himself, when wounded, took a pathetical way of reproaching, to those about him, who had flattered him with the suggestion that hee was a sonne of Jupiter's. This blood, says hee, which you see run from mee, Is the very blood of a Mortal, And not such as Homer describes flowing from the gods.

It is flattery, beloued, (The unpun-

unpunish'd poysoning of Princes) against which this Doctrin ought principally to bee enforced, As being that compliance with the Defects of another, which Can hardly bee excercised without notable Detriment (whatever may appear of advantage for the present) both to one's self and others.

Most men in high place are naturally so apt to flatter themselves, and to overthrow what is good in them by an over-value, That few of them can escape some degree, euen of madnesse in their Innate vanity, If to that there bee an accession of Inordinate applause from those about them.

ffarr bee it from my intention (while I enforce this Doctrin against flattery) to deprive vertue of it's chief reward in this world, Praise & comendation.

It was well observ'd by a Grave Authour, That as, for the propagation of mankind, Nature had placed excessive pleasure in the Act of Generation wherby man might bee powerfully urged to that, which otherwise the uncleannesse of the action might make him forbear, So, to the end that men might not be rebuted by difficulties in the wayes of vertue, ffor the propagation of that, Providence had placed an Incomparable Delight in the applause Resulting from it.

A delight most peculiar to princes,
whose

whose exalted Condition hath set them, in a manner, above all other earthly reward but only that of present Glory from vertuous deeds, Springing up and expanding to eternal fame, The most Charming incentive of all others, to those Illustrious operations, wherby their Divine Character is principally maintaintd. Xenophon, as great a Captain as Phylosopher, having endeavour'd to form the highest Idea of a Prince, In his Cyrus, Giues him most frequently the Attribute of *Philopaios*, That is, Louer of Praise, As the supreme stimulation to those Heroick vertues wherin hee exceeded all others.

Princes haue this further reason to Loue & Cherish praise, for that great applause doth not only illustrate vertues, but also hide defects. So, Julius Cæsar is said, neuer to haue been more delighted then when hee was allow'd to wear the Laurel Garland, which hee seldome Laid aside, valuing it not only, as the meed of so great a Conquerour, But also, as it couered some little baldnesse of his head.

And Certainly, beloued, There is not so deplorable a sign of a prince's being Incorrigibly abandoned to his vices, as when once hee comes to manifest, in the way of them, a contempt of present Censure and future fame.

But whilest princes are agreeably entertained and encouraged, in the wayes of vertue, by
just

just praise, from true friends, who are so few. Good god! In what danger do they live of being betrayed into all vice by flatterers, who are so many, And so Artificial in the preparing & administering of their poyson. A poyson, of all others, the hardest to bee avoided, and the hardest to bee Cured, if once admitted and swallowed.

It hath been observ'd, That poisons taken in wine or oyle, are least capable of remedie by antidotes, The one flying presently to the heart by it's Cordialnesse, And the other being of so irresistable an Insinuation into the vitals, by the smoothnesse and penetrativenesse of it's nature, Both which qualities are too unluckily assembled in flattery. O! would to god that the acceptablenesse therof, to some princes, were not an occasion of Comparing it yet further with wine and oyle, in their effects, Of which the Psalmist says, That the one makes glad the heart, The other a cheerfull Countenance.

Beloued, One chief danger from a flatterer is, That hee is so Like a friend. But hee should be for that the more Odious, As an Ape is held to bee, among creatures, the most Ridiculous and Contemptible, because, resembling a man so much, hee is still a Brute beast.

Many philosophers haue employd great Speculation and Oratory In the distinguishing a friend

friend from a flatterer. But none, in my opinion, hath illustrated the difference more Ingeniously then Tirius Maximus, In saying, That the gods also haue their flatterers, That the truly Religious man is god's friend, The Superstitious his flatterer.

But the all-seeing eye of the almighty cannot bee Deceiued by Resemblances, Wheras, without a special assistance from him, The frail humanity of Princes, can hardly make the important distinction.

The very natures of many vertues and vices Lye so near together, That their names are easily and almost Indiscernably transferr'd, by Artificial Insinuators into the affections of princes.

How easily is Auarice represented to them in the dresse of wise and wary prouidence.

How easily is Prodigalitie set forth, Illustriously, with the title and habit of princely Bounty & Magnificence. And how easily is their Lust and Sensualitie painted out for that Amorous Nature, which hath often been the Concomitant of greatest Conquerours, and the Completion of the greatest saints.

Beloued, This flattery of vice in Princes, though in it self the meanest and most detestable of all others in the flatterers, Yet is it of the Least danger, to those towards whom it is exercised, as being so grosse and palpable.

There haue been few princes so
blinded

blinded and Infatuated, in their vice, as to haue quite loft distinguishment betwixt good and evil.

There remains, usually, in the most transported, though not Conscience, yet Conscioufnesse enough to furnish them, by Interiour Evidence, with contempt for the Impudence and meannesse of such Adulation.

But the Dangerous flattery indeed Is, where the prince himself is made complice & party in it, Bee it as to actions, Or in Opinions Leading to them.

How often hath princes engaged themselves in stubborn and dangerous resolutions, upon specious but imperfect glimmerings of things, wherein they imagined they saw very clear, And might haue been brought to do so Indeed, had not flatterers multiplied & reflected unto them, their own mistaken lights and deceiving Images.

How often haue princes been withdrawn from prudent resolutions, Settled upon great Council and deliberation, By flatterers, Observing and improving some weak side of their Inclinations.

How often haue princes exercised bounties with an applause to themselves, As having placed them on worthy Subjects, And been Celebrated for them by their flatterers, As having purely proceeded from generous principles of a Royal nature, when they
knew,

knew, as well as the Cloſd receſſes of the prince's own breſt, that they ſprang not from conſideration of the partie's merit, But from ſecret relation and uſefulneſſe to ſome prevailing affection.

Beloved, It may poſſibly Suffice that a prince pray heartily to god to preferue him from flatterers of all other kinds, But as to this ſort of flattery, hee will haue reaſon to employ the ſpaniſh prayer *Guarde me Dios de mi*, That is, God ſhield mee from my ſelf.

The flattery towards which, (next unto this) princes had need bee moſt wary and Alert, Is, That adulation which is uſher'd in by ſeeming admoniſhment, when under the maſk of a noble Liberty of reprehention for ſome frailtie of ſmall Conſequence, flattery, to a prince's Darling ſinne, is cloſely Inſinuated. This is the moſt dangerous of flatteries; As there is no kind of Detraction ſo Artificial as that which is let in under the diſguiſe of Commendation.

But beloued this mention of Detraction Leads mee to obſerue unto you, another ſort of flattery to princes, which, at firſt bluſh, It may ſeem extravagant to call ſo. That is, The flattery of Detraction, for when princes are of the humour mention'd by Tacitus, *Libertatem metuebat, adulationem oderat*, (which hath been the caſe of many) Then the ſubieſt of a Sly Courtier's Inſinuation grows very narrow & ſlippery,

slippery, *Angusta et Lubrica Oratio* as the Authour says, Vnlesse in the way of mesdisanse and Detraction, towards which there is alwayes a great pronenesse, as to acceptable Admission, In princes of that Composition. ffor where there are no natural colours wherby to heighten to them their own perfections, The exposal of the imperfections of others grows to bee the most delightfull aliment of self-Loue.

This age, beloued, hath Learnt a subtile and safe way of exercising Calumny, very entertainingly to princes, That is, In Masquerade, A french masquerade called Raillery, wherein good companions & familiars proceed towards men's honour and fame, As the thief did towards the purse of his sleeping friend, who putting his hand into his pocket to steale it, Said to himself, If you sleep it is in earnest, If you awake it is but in Jest.

This is, indeed, one of the most cruell wayes of assassinat, to honour & reputation that hath euer been Invented. And the likest to an Italian Inuention, Of shooting, from under a cloak, a long needle, out of a Litle, and easily conceal'd crossbow, Wounding Incurably because Invisibly.

Good God! How many a brave man hath been excluded from just esteem, and euen Lost in the good opinion of princes, By the secret ill impressions of this malicious Engine Raillery. Nay
what

what hath the Liberty allowed unto it, in some Courts, Cost great princes themselves, euen within the memory of middle-aged men.

Much more might be added, upon occasion of this Doctrine, against hurtfull compliance with the follies of others. But I conceive what hath been said sufficient for this Auditory. I come now to the Second, Namely.

That from the Lowest to the highest stage of mankind, No man deserues the name of a fool, how weak soever in more General talents, who discharges the duty of his particular Calling Rightly and faithfully. And that whoeuer is failing therein, Let his parts bee neuer so quick & pregnant in other things, Ought not to escape the Imputation of folly.

Beloued,

The first branch of this assertion is clear, from the very nature & *Ratio formalis* of practical wisdom, which Consists in pursuance of Right ends, By Apt and due meanes.

And the second, from the reason of Contraries, Since folly in practice is the opposite to practical wisdom. And what is the Right end, But that which the Calling Directs unto? And what Due meanes, but the Dutyes of that Calling?

There are many passages of scripture,

scripture, in full Confirmation of this Doctrine. Abner, in the whole Course of his Life, is not set out, There, for any great head-piece, And in his Death seems taxable with weaknesse, To haue trusted a man of such power, and bloody execution as Joab, After provokation by the Death of his brother. And yet David, in his Lamentation for the Death of Abner, asks this question. Died Abner as a fool? A sort of Interrogation which carries with it it's own answer in the negative. Abner then died not as a fool, Since hee had Liued and Died as a brave through-Man in his profession. This is an Instance in the upper stage of men. But, euen in the Lowest, there are remarkable ones in Scripture. Hiram's Brazier is there Celebrated for wisdom, And Aaron's Taylor, as to his priestly Garments, for the spirit of wisdom.

Lastly, women themselves, their proper office & profession being to spin, (and our Law therefore calling the greatest Ladies spinstresses) Are, in feveral texts of Exodus, set forth, upon the account of well spinning, for wise and wise-hearted.

Socrates, whose great talent was, to instruct succinctly by questions, And pleasantly to mortifie Superfluous Discourfers, Askt Memnon, What is vertue? Memnon Replyed, There is the vertue of a man, and the vertue of a woman. Of a private man, and of a Magistrate. Of a child, and of an old man.

Instead

Instead of single vertue, which I enquired after, quoth Socrates, you shake about my ears a whole hye of vertues.

Had Socrates askt the question, concerning practical wisdom, Memnon, In answering as hee did, had been Lesse expos'd to the Raillery. For certainly, practical prudence is of as many several sorts as there are formal fix'd Callings and professions in the world, Since Relatiuely to them, there is no wisdom truly to bee called so, but the wisdom of application.

How highly then, dearly beloued, does it import euery man, As hee will shun the Odious Imputation of folly, To endeavour to discharge, as hee ought, the Dutyes of his Calling. The first and most important step wherunto Is, The understanding rightly what those Duties are.

Xenophon tells us, Cambises taught Cyrus, That for Mariners, who knew not how to steer a shipp, to pray for a good voyage. For a Husbandman, who had not manured his ground, To pray for a good Haruest. Or for a General, without experience in Battels, To pray for victory, was a sin against the Law of Divine providence.

Beloued,

When I first offered unto you this
Doctrin,

Doctrin, I told you, That it might affoord good Memento's, euen to princes themselues, Of their Incumbent Duties. A bold word, Is it not? 'To speak to Soueraigns of their Duties? What! must their reputation of wisdome or folly depend vpon common rules of plebeians? Beloued, in this point, of Rightly performing the office, to which god hath Called them, Yes verily.

I know before whom I haue the honour to speak at this time, And I do it, with a heart as full of Reverence and veneration to the transcendant qualities of his Person, as to the Lustre of his Throne. And it is the knowledge of that clear Discernment, wherwith god hath blessed his understanding, which encourages mee to Enforce this truth in his presence. That the higher and more important to many, the Calling is, The more Eminent must needs bee the Celebration of wisdome, Or the Imputation of weakness, Respectively, in the discharge of it, According to Incumbent duty.

What greater instance of the proper nature of wisdome in Soueraigns, Then the Reason giuen by Solomon to god, for his asking of That, preferably to all other things.

Not that hee might out-witt his neighbour princes, And haue the Glory of exceeding them, in the tryals, then in fashion, Of resolving Dark questions.

questions. Not that hee might pierce into the secrets of nature, Or draw from thence succours to Mortalitie, in it's Infirmities. But that hee might Judge (that is Gouvern) his people aright. That was his busines, and the great point vpon which the solidity of his wisdome depended, Namely, vpon a right Discharge of the Duties appertaining to his kingly office.

Hear also what our English Solomon (king James of Blessed memory) Recommends to his sonn upon this subiect.

Above all vertues (says hee) study to know well your own Craft, which is to rule your people. And afterward, in the same kingly work, hee adds, as a prime branch therof, These words, (fit to bee written in Chrystal with the point of a Diamond,) Beware alwayes to abuse your self, in making your sporters your Councillours.

I think, Beloved, I shall need use no more words to Convince euery one who hears mee, That the reputation of wisdome or weaknesse, in kings, Depends farr more then in all other callings whatsoever, upon their Discharging, aright, the Dutyes of their Sublime and glorious office. But alas! who shall teach Soveraigns what those Duties are?

Machiavel in his Introduction to the famous, Or rather infamous, book of his prince, Saith, That as Painters to draw well the perspective of mountains,

mountains, do set themfelues in the valleys. And to set forth rightly the Landkip of vales, do place themfelues vpon hills. So, to understand well the nature of Subiects, one must be a king. And to bee able to Declare rightly the part of a king one must be a subiect. An elegant preamble, But farr from a judicious or true affertion, Since none are so unfit, to instruct kings in their Duty, as subiects are. To venture to do it by word of mouth in a private Capacitie Is too hazardous a presumption, And in writeing, The Chief undertakers, I haue euer met with, haue appeared to mee much apter, in their works, To teach Subiects to faile in their Duties, Then princes to perform rightly theirs. It belongs to god alone To teach, To reprove and to presse home to kings, Their kingly obligations. Who but a Samuel was to instruct or reprove a Saul. Who a David but a Nathan. Who an Ahab, but an Elijah. & who an Hezekiah, but an Ifaiah.

All Soveraigns, beloued, are *Adeo-*
dati, Given by God, The good for the greatest blessing,
The bad for the greatest curse upon Nations. But
excellent kings are not only *Adeodati*, But *Theodidactoi*
also, That is, Taught by God. Taught by him in
his written word. By his Chosen Ministers. And by
their fellow king's Instructions and examples. Let
princes then Read Scripture frequently; Hear gods
word preacht Attentively, And Carefully peruse the
good

good Histories and Aduices of their eminent progenitors, They shall need no Other Teachers.

The Dutyes of princes, Comon with other Christians, are sufficiently set forth in euery good booke of practical Divinity, and often-times notably well taught from this pulpit. But their Special Dutyes, *quatenus kings*, sparingly and rarely, Notwithstanding the power from almighty god, given to his ministers to do it with Authoritie, As his Commission'd Ambassadors, when called to preach unto them. So, St Paul teaches us, In the 20. verse of the 5. Chapter, of the second epistle to the Corinthians, In these words, *Now then wee are Ambassadors for Christ, As though god did beseech you by us, wee pray you in Christ's stead*—And so forth.

Beloved, Should our Gracious Sovereign send, the meanest of his subiects, as his Ambassador, to the highest of earthly Monarcks, euen upon an unpleasing errand, Hee would bee receiued with that regard, which were due to the greatnesse of the sender, Without reflection upon the Littlenesse of the person Employed. Much lesse ought any minister of god's word, (though as poor a worm as my self) Employ'd by the king of kings, to speak from him, in this place, Doubt of being heard by an Anointed of his with Benignitie.

founded in this assurance, I shall
take

take the Liberty to tell you. That the actions of kings, *quatenus kings*, in performance of their Regal office, are to bee regulated, in many cases, by measures farr differing from the general maxims of Plebeian vertue. Vulgar rules can no more fit the elevation of kings, Then Astronomical Tables, Calculated for the Latitude of Rome or Paris, can bee proper for the Horizon of London or Edinburgh.

There might bee instances giuen, in most of the Dominions in Christendome, where Princes, by their personal vertues, Deservedly passing almost for saints, Haue been as justly reckoned among the Least wise kings, & Least deserving of the publick, through Deficiency in some other vertues, more especially required to the well governing of their subjects.

And on the other side, some princes generally condemned for personal vices, haue been allow'd by all men, for most wise and illustrious Sovereigns. Beloved let not this truth bee wrested to a wrong and uncharitable Construction, As if somewhat should haue fallen from mee in the Pulpit, in Derrogation of personal vertue, and piety, And in excuse of vice and licentiousnesse in Princes. But let it bee taken Rightly, as it is rightly Intended, To give a clearer comprehension, That there are certain Regal qualities, Of Consideration great enough (In order to publick good) To out-weigh and overbeare the obligation

obligation of some recommendable Christian virtues in a private man. And this I take to be most true, Not only Morally and Politically speaking, But euen Theologically also; And that it may passe for an Orthodox position in Divinity.

That Sovereign princes are more strictly accountable to god's Justice for such faults, *quatenus kings*, (though lesse black in appearance) as involve in mischief the people, whose good they are ordain'd to procure, then for their foulest sins as Individual men. What more Christian virtues, Beloved, as to a private good man, then Patience, Long sufferance, unconcernment in worldly things, and resignation up to god of all vindicativenesse?

And what more Contrary to the Regal Duty of a king, then sufferance of Injury and Contempt to his Character, Then a dough-baked Indifference in the high Concerns of his Government, Or then such a tenderneffe and benignity of nature as shall hinder him from just revenges, and from kingly resentments. Solomon says, That the wrath of a king is like the roaring of a Lyon, and so it ought, indeed, to bee, That is Terrible to all it's provokers. Provided alwayes, That kingly wrath bee never Confounded, and made promiscuous with personal passion of the private man, neither in it's motion nor in it's execution. The Lyon must not roar at the snarlings of a Lap-dog.

Princes must beware exercising, euen by their own special orders, the kingly power of Revenge vpon vulgar Incidents of the man. But aboue all things, it imports a Sovereign to take heed of suffering any under him, how near or dear foeuer, To abuse of Regal power to private revenges. There is nothing that derogates so much from the kingly Character, or which the people suffer with so Contemptuous an impatience, as to find themselues Injured and oppress'd by that superiority of power, which is Ordain'd and allow'd to princes, not more for their own safety, then for protection of their subiects from the Injurious violences of any.

In short, It seems to mee, upon the whole matter, That all such private vertues as are apt to Lessen Reuerence (the fundamental essence of Regalitie) Ought to bee sparingly or very privatly exercised by princes.

On the other side, Beloued, such private excesses of the frail mortal, as draw not with them, either personal contempt or publick scandal, are to bee born in kings, by their subiects without murmur.

But at the same time, I shall Confidently say, That what prince foeuer in the world, though neuer so great and powerfull, shall supinely neglect the Consequences of publick scandal from Irregularities of life, is in a deplorable Condition.

Now since princes themselues are not excepted in what our Saviour denounces against
those

those who scandalize euen litle Children, What then ought Subiects (though neuer so great) to expect from Divine and human justice, who shall, in the face of the Sun, continue a course of life scandalous to whole Nations.

I think, beloved, it may bee safely affirm'd, That in the world's history many great kings will bee found to haue brought their Temporal and Eternal Crowns into hazard, through the sins of others, which they haue multiplyed by impunity and by ill example, much more then by all their own most unjustifiable actions, if not aggravated by the publicitie of them. Read but the 15. & 16. chapters of the first book of kings, There you shall find, How many Sovereigns were successively destroy'd, by the will of god almighty, Not so much for any Lust, Bloodynesse, Rapine, Or even Idolatry of their own, as, in expresse terms, Because they made Israel to sin. Solomon himself, wee see, was drawn, by his weak side towards women, to joyn with them in acts of Idolatrie. But yet Since hee sinn'd in that kind, so, as not to engage the generality of his subiects in the crime, But that the service of the true god was still continued in his temple, God was mercifully pleased, to forbear the punishment of it in his person, Laying it upon his posteritie, And that in a Limited measure, Whereas Jeroboam, Otherwise a gallant man, and Chosen as such, by god himself,

To

To bee king over Israel, in the room of Solomon's
fonne, Had Judgments denounced against him & his,
of the most terrible nature, Because hee made Israel to
fin. Although it seem evident in the text, That his
setting upp the golden Calves, was, Not through any
Idolatry of his own, But only an act of state policy To
keep his subjects from repairing to Jerusaleme, (The
Capital feat of his enemy) vpon pretence of religious
Duties.

Beloued, It is a just subiect for our
constant prayers to almighty god, That hee would
grant to kings, Strict rectitude of actions, and Inten-
tions, according to the precepts of Christian piety and
true Morality in all things.

But if that may not bee obtain'd,
That hee would grant unto them, for the good of
those whom hee hath appointed them to Rule, Such
Phainomena, Such Appearances, at least, as may bee of
Edification and of encouragement to good. Since the
people will alwayes bee more powerfully governed
by the example then by the Laws their Sovereign
giue.

Now since the actions of princes
are, as it were, the hand of that great Clock, vpon the
most eminent steeple, By which other clocks and
watches are set, (And which should it self be regulated
by the great Sun-dial The Law of god) Let the hand
shew

shew but the hour right, It belongs not to the world to enquire, whether it owe it's true Demonstrative motion to an inward spring, Or to the Swingguings of a pendula.

Now to shut up all, Dearly beloved, Let us, in the first place render heartily, to almighty god, our Devoutest thanks, & gratefull acknowledgments, for his great goodnesse to this Nation, In having endowed our gracious Sovereign, Not only with personal vertues, and qualities so admirable and so amiable, But also with so great a proportion of Regal eminences. And in the next, Let us fervently beseech his Divine Matie: To vouchsafe unto his anointed such marks of his favour as he once did (for their guidance) To the Children of Israel, A dark Cloud, And a pillar of fire. A Cloud between the people and the Human frailties of their Sovereign, to cover and conceal them, And a pillar of fire before his Eminent vertues, To illustrate & make them still more and more Conspicuous and exemplary.

Prese then to shine before your people, *Great king*, They are the words of your wise Grand-father to his sonne, in the foremention'd book of his Bazilicon Doron, and the words of our Saviour are, *Let your light so shine before men, That, seeing your good works, they may glorifye your father w^{ch} is in heaven.*

So

So god being glorified by you, You can neuer fail of
being also Glorified by god againe. In this world,
according to the extent of Human capacity, And Eter-
nally in the world to come.







C 1136.5.37

The court sermon:

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